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Présentation des résultats d'une seconde étude comparative entre trois programmes de français langue seconde: le programme régulier F.S.L. (French second language), un programme d'immersion précoce (depuis la maternelle) et un programme d'immersion en septième année. Il s'agit de comparer les habiletés en français d'élèves qui ont commencé à suivre un programme d'immersion au début du primaire, en 1968-1969, et d'élèves inscrits en classe d'immersion de septième année en 1975-1976 avec les résultats d'un groupe de contrôle anglophone.

Au total, 127 élèves ont pris part à l'enquête: 43 élèves du programme d'immersion précoc 45 élèves de classes d'immersion de septième année et 39 élèves contituant un groupe de contrôle. Les test suivants ont été administrés au cours de l'année scolaire: le Test de rendement en français de la CECM ainsi que des tests de lecture, d'écoute et de production orale.

Dans tous les cas, à l'exception du test d'écoute, le groupe d'immersion précoce a obtenu des résultats significativement supérieurs à ceux du groupe d'immersion de septième année, groupe dont les résultats sont à leur tour nettement supérieurs à ceux du groupe anglais de contrôle. Voilà qui vient contredire les données recueillies l'année précédente et selon lesquelles il n'y avait pas de différence significative entre les classes d'immersion précoce et les classe d'immersion de septième année.

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Comparative Evaluation of the Early French Immersion, Grade 7 French Immersion and F.S.L. Program at the Grade 7 Level - A Follow-Up Evaluation-

Fred Genesee

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- A Follow-Up Evaluation -

F. Genesee

A report submitted by the Instructional Services Department
to
The Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal

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The research presented in this report was conducted as part of a larger project carried out to investigate individual differences in second language learning (See Tucker, Hamayan & Genesee, 1976, for a preliminary report of the project). However, since the results were also pertinent to a comparison of the Early Immersion and Grade 7 Immersion programs, they are being reported very briefly here.

A preliminary comparison of the Early Immersion and Grade 7 Immersion programs (Genesee & Chaplin, 1975) found that the Early Immersion students surpassed the Grade 7 Immersion students on only one test in a battery of French language tests, namely, the Test de Rendement en Français (5e année). No significant differences were found between the groups on tests of reading, listening or oral production skills in French. It was pointed out in that report that these results should be interpreted with caution owing to the special nature of this pilot Early Immersion group and to problems associated with findings based on pilot groups in general.

Therefore, as a follow-up to this preliminary evaluation, the current evaluation included (1) students from the 1968-69 Early French Immersion class who had started the program in kindergarten, (2) students from the 1975-76 Grade 7 French Immersion class, and (3) students in the regular English program with French-as-a-second-language (FSL). Testing was limited to French language skills.

THE SAMPLE

Three groups of students were included:

1) Early Immersion Group: students who began the French Immersion program in kindergarten in September 1969 and who were in the Grade 7 post-immersion program (40% French) in 1975-76. These students were attending Westmount High School.

2) Grade 7 Immersion Group: students who had followed the regular English program with FSL in grades 1 to 6 and who were in the Grade 7 Immersion program (85% French) in 1975-76. These students were attending Wentworth School, a French immersion centre.

3) English Control Group: students who had followed the regular English program with FSL in grades 1 to 7. These students were attending St.Laurent High School.

A summary of the sample sizes is presented in Table 1 along with the average I.Q. scores of each group. The I.Q. scores are full-scale I.Q.'s (verbal and non-verbal), based on the Canadian Lorge Thorndike Test of Intelligence which was administered in November 1974, when the students were in grade 6.

TABLE I

SAMPLE SIZE

	EARLY IMMERSION	GRADE 7 IMMERSION	ENGLISH CONTROL
Male	20	19	22
Female	23	26	17
Average I.Q.	114.83	114.68	105.33

Note that, although the English Control, on the average, scored lower on I.Q., there was no difference between the Early Immersion and Grade 7 Immersion Groups. Therefore, the performance of the two immersion groups on the subsequent language tests was not differentially influenced by I.Q. On the other hand, the performance of the Control students may reflect, in part, their lower I.Q. This influence, however, was probably restricted to the tests of academic language skills (Genesee, 1976). In any event, the comparison between the two immersion groups is the one of interest in this report.

TEST BATTERY

1) Reading

A modified version of the Test de Lecture "California" (Cycle inférieur and 6ième année combined) was used. This is a standardized group test, with multiple - choice items, designed for use with native French-speaking students. It consists of six subtests. Subtests 1 to 4 assess vocabulary skills as they relate to mathematical,

scientific, social and general terminology; subtests 5 and 6 assess reading comprehension skills as required in understanding written directions and connected prose. For the sake of this evaluation, subtests 1 to 6 were combined to form one score with a maximum possible value of 120.

2) Test de Rendement en Français (Niveau 6)

This is a group test designed and standardized by the C.E.C.M. The grade 6 level was used instead of the grade 7 level since pre-testing had shown that this level was more appropriate for all the groups. This test has a number of multiple-choice items which assess the following types of skills: spelling, synonyms, antonyms, the function of words in sentences, gender and verb tense. For the data analysis, raw scores were converted to stanine equivalents, which were based on the grade 6 population of the C.E.C.M. as of November 1974.

3) Test d'Ecoute

The students had to answer 13 multiple-choice questions based on a CBC newsbroadcast. This was a standardized, group test administered by means of a tape recorder.

4) Oral Production

Each student was interviewed individually by a native French-speaking person. In the first part of the interview, the student was asked to describe a cartoon picture. Subsequently, in the second part, he/she was engaged in a short conversation with the interviewer on topics related to the cartoon or to the student's school experiences. The interviews were tape recorded for later analysis.

Each student's speech sample was later evaluated by two raters independently on five different scales: compréhension, prononciation, grammaire, vocabulaire and communication. The communication dimension was intended to assess the student's willingness to speak French and his/her comfort while doing so. The ratings range from a maximum of 5, indicating excellent or native-like skill, to a minimum of 1, indicating very poor skill. The raters were native French-speaking Canadians. They were not necessarily trained in linguistics. It was felt desirable to employ untrained native-French speakers since, in most day-to-day situations when we speak a second language, we are evaluated by non-trained people. The ratings of both raters were combined to form an average score for each student on each scale.

RESULTS

Separate analyses of variance (Least squares solution) were carried out on the results of each test. The main variables were school group (Early Immersion, Grade 7 Immersion, Control) and sex of student (male, female). A summary of these analyses is presented in Table 2. There were significant differences between the school groups on every test. In every case, except the Test d'Ecoute, the pattern of results was the same -- t e Early Immersion Group scored significantly higher than the Grade 7 Immersion Group, who, in turn, scored significantly higher than the English Control Group. In the case of the Test d'Ecoute, the Early Immersion Group ($\overline{X}$ = 5.32) scored higher than the English Control Group ($\overline{X}$ = 4.34); otherwise, there were no significant differences.

TABLE 2

Summary of Results [1].

	Early Immersion		Grade 7 Immersion		English Control	F Ratio	df
1. TEST DE RENDEMENT EN FRANCAIS (max = 9)	5.08	**	3.86	**	2.07	50.88***	2,121
2. TEST DE LECTURE (max = 120)	80.93	**	72.73	**	53.26	75.15***	2,121
3. TEST D'ECOUTE (max = 16)	5.32	**	4.75		4.34	4.43*	2,121
ORAL PRODUCTION (max = 5)							
4. COMPREHENSION	4.91	*	4.48	**	2.93	56.50***	2,115
5. PRONONCIATION	4.20	*	3.69	**	2.57	28.78***	2,115
6. GRAMMAIRE	4.36	**	3.60	**	2.08	54.92***	2,115
7. VOCABULAIRE	4.37	**	3.48		2.14	51.32***	2,115
8. COMMUNICATION	4.39	**	3.57	**	2.42	61.48***	2,115

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

1. Scores joined by a line differ significantly from one another.

DISCUSSION

Contrary to last year's fi. ings, there were significant differences between the 1975-76 Early Immersion and Grade 7 Immersion Groups on all tests. The reason for this discrepancy is not clear. It is worth pointing out in this respect that a comparative evaluation of the pilot Early Immersion Group with the Grade 7 Immersion Groups in the South Shore Protestant Regional School Board also failed to find consistent differences in favor of the early immersion group (Bruck, Lambert & Tucker, 1974). Subsequent evaluation of a follow-up Early Immersion Group at the grade 7 level, however, revealed quite consistent advantages for these students over comparable students who had taken a Grade 7 French Immersion program (Bruck, Lambert & Tucker, 1976). The findings from these two sets of evaluations illustrate the importance of replication studies in education assessment.

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